

Winter 2008

ESOL Level 1 Orientation and Goals

Hello Aaron, Kirsten, & Vanya!

Welcome back to Level 1. This document is updated quarterly, so please read it over again!

This level has been in a state of flux for several years, but I am hopeful that now that we have an established pre-literacy class, Level 1 will stabilize. This is the beginning level of ESOL. In Level 1, we strive to establish good habits of responsibility and effort. Students coming from a variety of educational backgrounds need to build a foundation for the culture of an American classroom. We attempt to build a community of learners who help each other achieve common goals.

Students in Level 1 need confidence and success. One way to build confidence is through repetition. The curriculum of Level 1 lends itself to a repetitive, cyclical approach. Another way to increase confidence is for students to do as much as possible with classroom activities. Once students are familiar with patterns, they can take over activities like asking oral review questions, passing our name cards, erasing the board, collecting papers, putting themselves in groups, finding a partner who speaks a different language, etc.

The Level 1 curriculum covers the alphabet, basic phonics, the calendar, numbers, time, money, simple information questions answered orally and in writing, basic directions, family vocabulary, common signs, an introduction to the "be" verb, and reading simple stories. (Time and the "be" verb were originally in this level, but have been in Level 2 for awhile. Now they are back with us.) All this content can be introduced and then re-presented in increasingly complex ways. For example, the first time through we might concentrate on getting the months in order. Then we could talk about the seasons. Then we could add some weather words or discuss holidays. Increasingly complex S/L/R/W exercises can be presented each time the basic material is covered, pushing fluency up a notch. The important thing is to think of a spiral, and provide lots of different ways for students to engage with the basic material throughout the quarter.

We now have a pre-literacy level for students who either are not literate in their L1 or perhaps who come from a language background that uses a completely different alphabet. Our pre-literacy level covers some of the same material, but in a different, slower, way.

We try our best to accurately place students during CASAS, but sometimes students need to be moved up or down in those first few days. It is important to do your own assessment during those first days to facilitate this. (Some quick assessment tools are provided in the collection of materials.) It is important to network with the instructors teaching the pre-literacy and the Level 1 classes. When we accurately place students, we increase student success and retention. In winter, 2008, Marjorie Richards (#4121) is the morning pre-literacy teacher and Barbara Hedlund (use email) is the evening pre-literacy teacher. Level 1 covers a lot of material. If you have borderline students, please consider moving them to the pre-literacy class. They will have the benefit of a smaller class and a slower pace.

Our students generally do not have time to do homework. It usually does not work to make a class activity dependent on something you expected students to do at home. However, providing exercises for extra practice over the weekends is a great idea. The crossword puzzle materials that review numbers, time, the calendar, etc. are good for take home practice.

In Fall, 2007, I piloted a listening text in Level 1 called Beyond Basics, by John and Mary Ann Boyd. We purchased a class set with co-op funds and let each student write in the book and take it home. In my opinion, they were a great success, despite an occasional piece of dated content, like a reference to the Soviet Union. We believe that using these books is an excellent way to improve overall listening fluency. We would like every class to be able to take advantage of this resource. Working through one lesson daily takes about 15 minutes.

In winter 2008, I will be piloting a variation—we ordered another class set and had them laminated to make them reusable from quarter to quarter. Because it is a listening text, where students check boxes or circle words, they are not the most exciting books to give to students to keep. If the wipe-off method of using them proves doable, we will order class sets for all the level 1 classes to use in the spring. The students of course do like having their own book. I'm going to address this in two ways. One, by producing vocabulary sheets to go with the books, and two, by using coop money to purchase a reader. More on this momentarily.

On-going assessment should be a regular part of Level 1, including student self-assessment. Level 1 has the benefit of being very concrete: it is easy for the student to monitor what they have mastered and what they need to work on. There are content reviews that can identify who is having problems with what. In addition, some of the worksheets can double as assessments by changing the conditions. If you have a rotation in the lab, it works really well to use part of your lab day to work on individual needs.

The end-of-quarter assessment involves an oral interview, a listening/writing component, and a reading/writing component. It usually takes teachers a few days to conduct this assessment. I divide my students into groups of six students. I test one group a day. I start with the L/W component, then while my aide monitors the R/W component, I conduct individual oral interviews. To advance to Level 2, a student must demonstrate an 80% mastery on the written assessment, and an "adequate" rating on the oral interview.

Some general hints for Level 1:

- ❖ Put a heavy emphasis on phonological skills and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (the famous BICS) before intense reading instruction.
- ❖ Develop strong listening skills in tandem with literacy skills.
- ❖ Keep it structured and predictable.
- ❖ Have students do as much as possible.
- ❖ Create large print handouts with lots of white space.
- ❖ Write and say directions.

Using the Lab

Several useful activities in the lab

1. The Alphabet software
2. Rosetta Stone software (especially the second half of the quarter)
3. website: www.starfall.com
4. website: www.netrover.com/~crose/dolch/dolch.htm
5. website: www.manythings.org

(Rosetta Stone is very popular and I like it. The way one moves through the lessons can be confusing though. It's a bad design. There are four kinds of exercises to accompany each lesson. To get from one exercise to the next, you have to exit via the parachute. If you press the forward arrow, you get the next lesson, not the next exercise.)

Last quarter I did a couple of projects that were fun. I'd like for us to have a place to share ideas for lab projects. I included a description of my projects at the end of this document.

The Level 1 Outcomes:

Alphabet

- Recognize, (read), write, say
- Alphabetize lists
- Differentiate upper and lower case letters

Phonics {WE NEED TO HAVE AN ON-GOING DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EMPHASIS TO GIVE PHONICS}

- Know sounds of letters, vowels (emphasis on short vowel sounds), consonant blends, vowel combinations
- Decode words that follow regular patterns
- Read and spell common sight words (see attached list)

Numbers

- Read, say, and spell numbers in words and numerals from 1-20
- Count from 1-100
- Recognize spoken numbers from 1-00 and be able to write the numeral
- Be able to say ordinals from 1-31
- Be able to carry numbers while adding and subtracting in preparation for making change in the money unit. (*Assess early for math skills. There is a simple test included in the materials. We have math books that students can keep for anyone who needs help with these basic math skills. This is a good activity to use in the lab.*)

Calendar

- Read months, days in both long and shortened forms
- Read and write dates expressed in both words and number
- Order and spell the days of the week and the months of the year

Money

- Identify and spell coins and write their worth
- Figure change
- Hear and read amounts and be able to write number values

Time

- Tell time with both digital and analog clocks
- Match clock face with time

Questions

- Recognize that rising intonation, do/does/did/ or WH words signal questions
- Respond to basic questions orally

How are you?

What is your name? What's his name? What's her name?

Where are you from? Where is she from? Where is he from? Where are they from?

Where do you live? Where does she live? Where does he live?

Where do they live?

What's the date?

When is your birthday?

What is your address?

What is your phone number?

Are you married?

Do you have children?

Reading

- Be able to read basic questions about one-self and write answers.
- Be able to identify family words on a simple tree {husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, child, children, aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, nephew, grand-mother, grandfather, and all the various in-laws}
- Read and understand simple sentences on familiar topics. i.e.
"Opal is a girl. She has a dog."
- Be able to identify common signs and their meaning.

Listening/Speaking

- Recognize and respond appropriately to basic formulaic speech {Hello, How are you, Good morning, Thank you, You're welcome, See you tomorrow, Goodbye, Have a nice weekend, etc.}
- Be able to follow basic classroom instructions {Take out paper, Put down pencil, Read, Hand out, Collect, Go to the board, Spell, Repeat, Find a partner, Give the pen to...etc.}
- Understand and respond to basic information questions.

Grammar

- Understand and use an "s" for plural

- Understand and use the irregular plural for common words like woman, man, child
- Understand that basic English syntax is subject-verb-object-preposition
- Recognize basic verbs as verbs
- Conjugate the verb "to be" in the present tense
- Recognize and use negative forms of the verb "to be" in the present
- Recognize and use contractions of the "be" verb

Punctuation

- Understand that sentences and proper names begin with a capital letter and end with a period or question mark

Writing

- Write simple dictated sentences using familiar structures i.e. "Her name is Barbara."
- Fill out forms requesting personal information (name, date, address, telephone, birthday, signature) staying on lines or in boxes
- Write answers to personal information questions

General

- Grasp basic organizational skills- (Color coded handouts, numbers-yellow, calendar -green, etc. kept together in notebook can help.)
- Have the ability to indicate they understand something, or that they don't and need help.

For students who are starting at zero, this is a lot. They may need multiple quarters in this level. For other students, one quarter in this level may be sufficient. Level 2 reviews some of this same material, but in more depth and with a growing emphasis away from canned responses and toward authentic communication. Level 2 also moves from content based to skills based instruction.

Each Level 1 teacher will check out a realia box at the beginning of the quarter. It contains a lot of materials you may find useful in achieving these objectives. If there is something you would like to have and it isn't in the box, please let the full-time level contact person know (this year it is me) and we can put it on our on-going wish list for purchases.

Now about reading...

Finding a level 1 reader that isn't insipid is hard. I invite everyone to share titles that might work. I like the Mr. Putter books, but they only work if I happen to have a really high level 1 class. But I like the idea of working with an actual book throughout the quarter.

In the meantime, I fall back on stories I write and illustrate for my students. The best ones are written about students in the current class. They all have adventures. When I hear about one, I turn it into a story (with their permission.) Over the years, I have written stories about

A student leaving his lights on and needing a jump from campus security

- A student failing the driving portion of the license test
- A student whose clothes were stolen from the communal dryer in her apartment
- A student burning the cake she made for her husband's birthday
- A student's duck farm in Ukraine.

I have adventures too of course, and I've made stories about the time I broke my leg going down a slide, and the time I was caught in a sandstorm in Africa.

Very Easy True Stories is another source for reading practice.

Help students get their ID/library cards; then introduce them to the Basic Skills collection in the library. Recommend that they check out a copy of Very Easy True Stories. I don't have them use the books in class, but they can review what we do in class on their own time.

In class: Using a particular story...

I make overheads of the first page, (the drawing that sets the scene), the small drawings, and the photo/text. I've had good results with these chapters.

- A Good Mother (fits the weather discussion)
- A Son for Mr. and Mrs. Aversa? (family)
- Elevator Romance (family)
- Binti to the Rescue (family)
- Returning a Favor (family)

Although it appears heavy on family, I've always worked the bulk of the family unit toward the end of the quarter when we have the time, money, calendar, to be verb, WH questions, pretty well covered. The progression to more reading and writing at this point works well.

Activities:

- Brainstorm words around title and drawing
- Read story one picture at a time.
- Ask a lot of Wh and yes/no questions
- Show full text and have students read one sentence each so I can check their pronunciation
- Find the be verbs
- Identify subject/verb in each sentence
- Identify noun referents for pronouns
- Make another overhead of the small pictures minus the words. Choose ones that move the story along. Students try and write simple sentences that go with each picture.
- Prepare a dictation from the story, concentrating on familiar structures and the verb to be.
- Use the "Chalk Talk" method to get their related stories from them. For example, with the story Elevator Romance, I asked them how they had met their spouses.

Specific Curriculum Ideas for Level 1

There are a couple of useful web sites for making materials.

www.bogglesworld.com

www.mes-english.com

http://www.writingwizard.longcountdown.com/handwriting_practice_worksheet_maker.html

Some of the following ideas came from these books.

Beginners by Peter Grundy

The Oxford Basics series by Jill and Charles Hadfield.

WHAT HAS WORKED

- I made posters at the beginning of the quarter with these words, in descending order,

Listen and Understand

Speak

Read

Write

This oriented the students to what they should expect in the level. I prefaced activities by pointing out which skill was involved. I used every opportunity to reinforce listening. For example, if we are working on matching the months to numbers, I will hand the students the month cards and then ask a student to "Give the May card to _____. " or "Put the May card on the table." Having said that, I will add that concurrent reading and listening may be more appropriate depending on the make up of the class. You may have a combination of literate students with no English at all and literate students with oral skills but no R/W skills in English.

- I also made posters that showed what words or phrases could be used if they didn't understand, or if they did understand. I encourage them to use these phrases during class.

Alphabet

- We have sets of foam magnetic letters and alphabet cards. The magnetic letters are a good way to review the alphabet and short vowel words. I used them a lot in the beginning of the quarter, and less as the quarter progressed.
- We also have some large cardboard alphabets. Students can cut out pictures from magazines of things that begin with a specific letter. Giant letters can then be posted. If students don't have enough vocabulary at the start, do it at the end, so they can see how many words they know. At the beginning, they could simply cut out pictures that interested them, and as a class, the pictures could be identified and

- divided into the appropriate letter. These large letters can also be used to make sight words or short vowel words.
- Use packs of letters and have pairs of students spell dictated words.
 - Practice alphabetizing months, days of week, and other groups of familiar vocabulary sets like family words, or their own names.
 - We have alphabet BINGO games available.

Phonics

- Have several students put their magnetic alphabets on the board. Pick out the vowels. Teacher dictates short vowel words and sight words. Students use the letters to spell the words. Students at their desks do the activity on their own paper. (This of course can also be done without the magnetic alphabets, but for the kinesthetic learners....)
- As part of a daily routine, teacher writes a morning note.

Example: **Good morning! Today is Tuesday, October 17, 2006, We are in the lab today.**

Teacher works through it phrase by phrase. Students practice reading it aloud, sounding out words when possible. The morning note became longer and more challenging as the quarter progressed. Eventually I start writing it like this
 goodmorningtodayistuesdaynovember282006itisverywetouttoday

Students take turns writing out complete words or even sentences. It's a great practice for punctuation and syntax. I also vary this activity by making the morning note into different kinds of cloze exercises as the quarter progresses. At the end of fall quarter, I had one of those magical moments—I walked into the class at 9:00 and the morning note was already written on the board. I almost cried I was so happy. They really had taken charge of their own learning.

- There are several phonics BINGO games included in your box of realia.
- I made a poster of the sight words, and also have them on index cards so the students can handle them in different ways.
- There are numerous phonics worksheets available. If you can get through the short vowel sounds, that's great! If you can go beyond that, that's great too.
- Barbara Hedlund made a useful jazz chant like exercise for reviewing the short vowel sounds.

Questions

- As part of a daily routine, one student passes out all the name cards after asking, "What's your name?"
- As part of a daily routine, teacher asks students the basic questions, mixing up the order. (What's your name? Ask a specific student the follow up. (What's her name?) Eventually present students with written questions and answers. (See handouts) As the quarter progresses, my questions include things like "What day comes before Sunday?" and "How many students are in class?" I also include the question, "How many words are in this sentence?" frequently.
- Eventually, these questions can be put on index cards and students can ask other students the questions. Another student can write the answers on the board. Or put the questions on the board and have volunteers write their answers. Then write the

follow-up questions, "What is her name?" and have another set of volunteers come answer those.

- One way to practice both oral and written is for the teacher to ask a student a few questions,

- What's your name? How do you spell that? Where are you from? When is your birthday? What's your address? What's your phone number?

and then write the answers on the board. Then give the pen to that student, who has to ask the same questions to another student and write down her answers. This can be tedious so one or two a day is usually sufficient.

- Write a prompting conversation on the board. Students stand under the stick figures and have the conversation.

- Hello! My name is _____. What's your name?
 - Hello _____. My name is _____. Nice to meet you.
 - Nice to meet you too, _____.

- Write these sentences on board.

I am from

I speak

I am

Then have index cards to choose from that finish the sentences. Students pick the correct card, stand underneath the sentences one at a time, and read their sentence. Later they can copy their sentences on a map of the world with their country indicated.

- Sometimes I ask one student a question about another student that requires the first student to ask the second student a question . Example: Maria, where does Jose live? Maria has to ask Jose. "Where do you live?" And then tell me—"He lives in"
- I make the students answer a question (based on the day's activities) before they can leave at the end of class. (This became a very popular activity.)

Dictations

- Use increasingly complicated sentences to reinforce the basic structures we are working with.
 - **Example:** His name is Dan. He is ten. Her name is Pam. She is two.Have pairs of students compare their sentences, and then agree on a set to write on the board. With many sets on the board it is easy to work on capitalization, end punctuation, and the spelling of these common words. See the attached list for variations on dictation that can be used as the quarter progresses and their skills get better. I included some basic sentences in strip form in your boxes that you can use in various ways.

Using a movie

I believe that the level determines the task, not the text, and so one can use movies with absolute beginners. I like to use movies because they are visual, interesting, and they provide a context for listening comprehension, and learning vocabulary and structure. I use movies in all the levels, but what I ask students to do will change.

Level 1 students cannot usually understand the dialogue, unless it happens to be very basic, spoken slowly, and I reply it a few times. (But it is exciting when they can catch a piece of authentic speech.) However, Level 1 students can respond to what they see on the screen, and what I ask them. I have them all make a yes-on-the-front-no-on-the-back large index card. As the movie plays, I ask yes/no questions that are within their grasp. Is that a girl? Is that a boy? I will also throw in WH questions from time to time, to stretch them a little—What color is Opal's shirt? The point of all this is to get their ears accustomed to English, and question formation, and to increase their vocabulary and listening comprehension. I can help them follow the gist of the story with my commentary, and my questions.

I also provide them with select vocabulary words. I will pass them out one day, and then review them the next. The words are chosen based on their general usefulness, and their relevance to the story. For the movie, Because of Winn-Dixie, the first set of words were: girl, father, daughter, friend, dog. As a follow-up, I might draw the picture on the board and have them fill in the letters.

I also make a big deal of English syntax. Every day, I write out 7 or 8 very basic sentences that summarize what we saw the day before. For example:

Opal is a girl.

She lives with her father.

Initially, I write all the words to all the sentences on separate erasable magic white board paper strips and pass them out. Then I read the sentences one by one. The students have to look at their word(s) and see if it is a part of the sentence they just heard, and if so, go stand in front. After the sentence is properly constructed, various students practice reading it aloud. At this point I physically group the parts of the sentence—this is the subject, this is the verb, this is the object, this is the prepositional phrase—subject-verb-object-basic English sentence pattern. Blablabla

These cards can also be put on the ledge and students can find the verbs, or the pronouns, etc.

Eventually, I hand out only the separate words that comprise one sentence. All those students go to the front and try and figure out the correct order. I thought this might be too hard for them, but they can do it.

On the last day of class for the week, I give the students a list of all the sentences we have been looking at all week. This collection of sentences week by week functions as a simple summary of the movie.

I also create handouts that are based on the movie, but that practice some specific point. For example, I constructed sentences with one word missing, then offered 3 words to choose from. Students had to read the sentence and pick the best word. I've also written sentences with verbs, or prepositions missing, (provided in a box). All this text is also a source of various dictations. Another dictation that was very popular is the "clicker" dictation. I read a sentence from the movie with one word missing. Instead of the word, I

use my clicker. Students have to decide what the missing word is, and write down the word. This is a great way to practice the sight words in context. For example: Opal goes to the party with ____ father. (her)

{All of my movie materials are in a binder and are available for anyone to look at or use.}

There are additional handouts with various activities available in the web folder marked Level 1 curriculum.

CASAS NOTE

Students at this level will often be doing a fill-in-the-bubble test for the first time. I have them fill in the information on the answer sheets to familiarize them with how it is done. It takes longer, of course, but then on test day they are not flummoxed.